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Amendment

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Amendments to the Claims

1. (canceled)

2. (currently amended) The process of claim 4, wherein the diagnostic information is imaging data.

3. (canceled)

4. (currently amended) ~~The process of claim 2,~~

An NMR imaging process, comprising:

subjecting an imaging object to a uniform polarizing magnetic field;

applying orthogonal magnetic field gradients to the imaging object;

applying RF energy to the imaging object according to a fast-spin echo technique;

subsequently applying RF energy to the imaging object according to a driven equilibrium technique;

detecting a nuclear magnetic resonance signal emitted by the imaging object;

processing the nuclear magnetic resonance signal to provide diagnostic information;

providing the diagnostic information to a presentation device such that a visual image corresponding to the imaging object can be viewed by an operator; and

making a subjective determination of whether the visual image is of good quality or bad quality;

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wherein applying RF energy to the imaging object according to a fast-spin echo technique includes applying an RF pulse corresponding to the angular precession frequency for a selected slice of the imaging object, and

further comprising applying an RF pulse corresponding to a different angular precession frequency, to select a respective different slice of the imaging object, if the subjective determination is that the visual image is of good quality.

5. (original) The process of claim 4, wherein the respective different slice of the imaging object is an adjacent slice of the imaging object.

6. (original) The process of claim 5, wherein the selected slice and the adjacent slice overlap.

7. (original) The process of claim 6, wherein the extent of the overlap is greater than 0% and less than or equal to 100%.

8. (currently amended) ~~The process of claim 3,~~

An NMR imaging process, comprising:

subjecting an imaging object to a uniform polarizing magnetic field;

applying orthogonal magnetic field gradients to the imaging object;

applying RF energy to the imaging object according to a fast-spin echo technique;

subsequently applying RF energy to the imaging object according to a driven equilibrium technique;

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detecting a nuclear magnetic resonance signal emitted by the imaging object;
processing the nuclear magnetic resonance signal to provide diagnostic
information;
providing the diagnostic information to a presentation device such that a visual
image corresponding to the imaging object can be viewed by an operator; and
making a subjective determination of whether the visual image is of good quality
or bad quality;

wherein applying RF energy to the imaging object according to a fast-spin echo technique includes applying an RF pulse corresponding to the angular precession frequency for a selected slice of the imaging object; and

further comprising applying another RF pulse corresponding to the angular precession frequency, to select the same slice of the imaging object, if the subjective determination is that the visual image is of bad quality.

9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) ~~The process of claim 9,~~

An NMR imaging process, comprising:
subjecting an imaging object to a uniform polarizing magnetic field;
applying orthogonal magnetic field gradients to the imaging object;
applying RF energy to the imaging object according to a fast-spin echo technique;
subsequently applying RF energy to the imaging object according to a driven
equilibrium technique;

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detecting a nuclear magnetic resonance signal emitted by the imaging object;
processing the nuclear magnetic resonance signal to provide diagnostic
information;
providing the diagnostic information to a presentation device such that a visual
image corresponding to the imaging object can be viewed by an operator;
making a subjective determination of whether the visual image is of good quality
or bad quality; and
tagging the diagnostic information, if the subjective determination is that the
visual image is of bad quality;
wherein applying RF energy to the imaging object according to a fast-spin echo
technique includes applying an RF pulse corresponding to the angular precession
frequency for a selected slice of the imaging object; and
further comprising automatically applying an RF pulse corresponding to a
different angular precession frequency, to select a respective different slice of the
imaging object.

11. (original) The process of claim 10, wherein the respective different slice of
the imaging object is an adjacent slice in a sequence of slices of the imaging object.

12. (original) The process of claim 11, wherein the selected slice and the
adjacent slice overlap.

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13. (original) The process of claim 12, wherein the extent of the overlap is greater than 0% and less than or equal to 100%.

14. (original) The process of claim 11, further comprising:
automatically applying an RF pulse corresponding to a final angular precession frequency, to select a final slice in the sequence of slices of the imaging object; and
applying an RF pulse corresponding to the angular precession frequency that corresponds to the tagged image data.

15. (currently amended) The process of claim 4, wherein the imaging object is a human being, and the uniform polarizing magnetic field is produced by a magnetic resonance imaging system, wherein the human being stands upright within the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

16. (currently amended) ~~The process of claim 1,~~
An NMR imaging process, comprising:
subjecting an imaging object to a uniform polarizing magnetic field;
applying orthogonal magnetic field gradients to the imaging object;
applying RF energy to the imaging object according to a fast-spin echo technique;
subsequently applying RF energy to the imaging object according to a driven
equilibrium technique;
detecting a nuclear magnetic resonance signal emitted by the imaging object; and

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processing the nuclear magnetic resonance signal to provide diagnostic information;

wherein applying RF energy to the imaging object according to a fast-spin echo technique includes applying an RF pulse corresponding to the angular precession frequency for a selected slice of the imaging object; and

further comprising, after providing the diagnostic information, moving the imaging object and applying an RF pulse corresponding to the same angular precession frequency, to select a different slice of the imaging object.

17. (original) The process of claim 16, wherein moving the imaging object includes changing the angle of the imaging object with respect to the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

18. (currently amended) The process of claim 4, wherein the fast-spin echo technique includes application of a multi-echo NMR imaging sequence.

19. (original) The process of claim 18, wherein the multi-echo NMR imaging sequence includes a plurality of different echoes, and wherein each of the plurality of different echoes is encoded differently.

20. (original) The process of claim 18, wherein the multi-echo NMR imaging sequence includes a plurality of different echoes, and wherein at least one of the plurality

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of different echoes is encoded differently than another one of the plurality of different echoes.

21. (original) The process of claim 18, further comprising applying a 90-degree RF pulse at the center of any of the plurality of different echoes.

22. (original) The process of claim 21, wherein the applied 90-degree RF pulse has a phase such that magnetization of the imaging object is forced in the direction of the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

23. (original) The process of claim 18, wherein the multi-echo NMR imaging sequence includes a first 90-degree RF pulse followed by a series of 180-degree RF pulses.

24. (original) The process of claim 23, wherein the series of 180-degree RF pulses includes n 180-degree pulses, which are followed by n echoes.

25. (original) The process of claim 24, further comprising applying a second 90-degree RF pulse at a center of the n th echo, such that magnetization of the imaging object is oriented in the direction of the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

26. (canceled)

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27. (currently amended) The process of claim 26 ~~29~~, wherein the diagnostic information is imaging data.

28. (canceled)

29. (currently amended) ~~The process of claim 28,~~

An NMR imaging process, comprising:

subjecting an imaging object to a uniform polarizing magnetic field;

applying orthogonal magnetic field gradients to the imaging object;

applying a first 90-degree RF excitation pulse;

applying a sequence of 180-degree RF excitation pulses following the first 90-degree RF excitation pulse;

applying a second 90-degree RF excitation pulse following the sequence of 180-degree RF excitation pulses;

detecting a nuclear magnetic resonance signal emitted by the imaging object;

processing the nuclear magnetic resonance signal to provide diagnostic information;

providing the diagnostic information to a presentation device such that a visual image corresponding to the imaging object can be viewed by an operator; and

making a subjective determination of whether the visual image is of good quality or bad quality;

wherein the first 90-degree RF excitation pulse corresponds to the angular precession frequency for a selected slice of the imaging object; and

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further comprising applying an RF pulse corresponding to a different angular precession frequency, to select a respective different slice of the imaging object, if the subjective determination is that the visual image is of good quality.

30. (original) The process of claim 29, wherein the respective different slice of the imaging object is an adjacent slice of the imaging object.

31. (original) The process of claim 30, wherein the selected slice and the adjacent slice overlap.

32. (original) The process of claim 31, wherein the extent of the overlap is greater than 0% and less than or equal to 100%.

33. (currently amended) ~~The process of claim 28,~~

An NMR imaging process, comprising:

subjecting an imaging object to a uniform polarizing magnetic field;

applying orthogonal magnetic field gradients to the imaging object;

applying a first 90-degree RF excitation pulse;

applying a sequence of 180-degree RF excitation pulses following the first 90-degree RF excitation pulse;

applying a second 90-degree RF excitation pulse following the sequence of 180-degree RF excitation pulses;

detecting a nuclear magnetic resonance signal emitted by the imaging object;

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processing the nuclear magnetic resonance signal to provide diagnostic information;

providing the diagnostic information to a presentation device such that a visual image corresponding to the imaging object can be viewed by an operator; and

making a subjective determination of whether the visual image is of good quality or bad quality;

wherein the first 90-degree RF excitation pulse corresponds to the angular precession frequency for a selected slice of the imaging object; and

further comprising applying another RF pulse corresponding to the angular precession frequency, to select the same slice of the imaging object, if the subjective determination is that the visual image is of bad quality.

34. (canceled)

35. (currently amended) ~~The process of claim 34,~~

An NMR imaging process, comprising:

subjecting an imaging object to a uniform polarizing magnetic field;

applying orthogonal magnetic field gradients to the imaging object;

applying a first 90-degree RF excitation pulse;

applying a sequence of 180-degree RF excitation pulses following the first 90-degree

RF excitation pulse;

applying a second 90-degree RF excitation pulse following the sequence of 180-degree RF excitation pulses;

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detecting a nuclear magnetic resonance signal emitted by the imaging object;
processing the nuclear magnetic resonance signal to provide diagnostic
information;
providing the diagnostic information to a presentation device such that a visual
image corresponding to the imaging object can be viewed by an operator;
making a subjective determination of whether the visual image is of good quality
or bad quality; and
tagging the diagnostic information, if the subjective determination is that the
visual image is of bad quality;

wherein the first 90-degree RF excitation pulse corresponds to the angular precession frequency for a selected slice of the imaging object; and

further comprising automatically applying an RF pulse corresponding to a different angular precession frequency, to select a respective different slice of the imaging object.

36. (original) The process of claim 35, wherein the respective different slice of the imaging object is an adjacent slice in a sequence of slices of the imaging object.

37. (original) The process of claim 36, wherein the selected slice and the adjacent slice overlap.

38. (original) The process of claim 37, wherein the extent of the overlap is greater than 0% and less than or equal to 100%.

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39. (original) The process of claim 36, wherein the first 90-degree RF excitation pulse corresponds to the angular precession frequency for a selected slice of the imaging object, the process further comprising:

automatically applying an RF pulse corresponding to a final angular precession frequency, to select a final slice in the sequence of slices of the imaging object; and
applying an RF pulse corresponding to the angular precession frequency that corresponds to the tagged image data.

40. (currently amended) The process of claim ~~26~~ 29, wherein the imaging object is a human being, and the uniform polarizing magnetic field is produced by a magnetic resonance imaging system, wherein the human being stands upright within the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

41. (currently amended) ~~The process of claim 26,~~
An NMR imaging process, comprising:
subjecting an imaging object to a uniform polarizing magnetic field;
applying orthogonal magnetic field gradients to the imaging object;
applying a first 90-degree RF excitation pulse;
applying a sequence of 180-degree RF excitation pulses following the first 90-degree RF excitation pulse;
applying a second 90-degree RF excitation pulse following the sequence of 180-degree RF excitation pulses;

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detecting a nuclear magnetic resonance signal emitted by the imaging object; and
processing the nuclear magnetic resonance signal to provide diagnostic
information;

wherein the first 90-degree RF excitation pulse corresponds to the angular precession frequency for a selected slice of the imaging object; and

further comprising, after providing the diagnostic information, moving the imaging object and applying an RF pulse corresponding to the same angular precession frequency, to select a different slice of the imaging object.

42. (original) The process of claim 41, wherein moving the imaging object includes changing the angle of the imaging object with respect to the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

43. (currently amended) The process of claim ~~26~~ 29, wherein each said 180-degree RF excitation pulse in the sequence generates a spin echo.

44. (original) The process of claim 43, wherein each said spin echo precedes a next 180-degree RF excitation pulse in the sequence.

45. (original) The process of claim 43, wherein the second 90-degree RF excitation pulse is applied at a center of the spin echo generated by a last 180-degree RF excitation pulse in the sequence.

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46. (original) The process of claim 43, wherein each said spin echo is encoded differently.

47. (original) The process of claim 43, wherein at least one said spin echo is encoded differently than another said spin echo.

48. (currently amended) The process of claim ~~26~~ 29, wherein the second 90-degree RF excitation pulse has a phase such that magnetization of the imaging object is forced in the direction of the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

49. (new) The process of claim 8, wherein the diagnostic information is imaging data.

50. (new) The process of claim 10, wherein the diagnostic information is imaging data.

51. (new) The process of claim 16, wherein the diagnostic information is imaging data.

52. (new) The process of claim 8, wherein the imaging object is a human being, and the uniform polarizing magnetic field is produced by a magnetic resonance imaging

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system, wherein the human being stands upright within the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

53. (new) The process of claim 10, wherein the imaging object is a human being, and the uniform polarizing magnetic field is produced by a magnetic resonance imaging system, wherein the human being stands upright within the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

54. (new) The process of claim 16, wherein the imaging object is a human being, and the uniform polarizing magnetic field is produced by a magnetic resonance imaging system, wherein the human being stands upright within the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

55. (new) The process of claim 8, wherein the fast-spin echo technique includes application of a multi-echo NMR imaging sequence.

56. (new) The process of claim 55, wherein the multi-echo NMR imaging sequence includes a plurality of different echoes, and wherein each of the plurality of different echoes is encoded differently.

57. (new) The process of claim 55, wherein the multi-echo NMR imaging sequence includes a plurality of different echoes, and wherein at least one of the plurality

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of different echoes is encoded differently than another one of the plurality of different echoes.

58. (new) The process of claim 55, further comprising applying a 90-degree RF pulse at the center of any of the plurality of different echoes.

59. (new) The process of claim 58, wherein the applied 90-degree RF pulse has a phase such that magnetization of the imaging object is forced in the direction of the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

60. (new) The process of claim 55, wherein the multi-echo NMR imaging sequence includes a first 90-degree RF pulse followed by a series of 180-degree RF pulses.

61. (new) The process of claim 60, wherein the series of 180-degree RF pulses includes n 180-degree pulses, which are followed by n echoes.

62. (new) The process of claim 61, further comprising applying a second 90-degree RF pulse at a center of the n th echo, such that magnetization of the imaging object is oriented in the direction of the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

63. (new) The process of claim 10, wherein the fast-spin echo technique includes application of a multi-echo NMR imaging sequence.

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64. (new) The process of claim 63, wherein the multi-echo NMR imaging sequence includes a plurality of different echoes, and wherein each of the plurality of different echoes is encoded differently.

65. (new) The process of claim 63, wherein the multi-echo NMR imaging sequence includes a plurality of different echoes, and wherein at least one of the plurality of different echoes is encoded differently than another one of the plurality of different echoes.

66. (new) The process of claim 63, further comprising applying a 90-degree RF pulse at the center of any of the plurality of different echoes.

67. (new) The process of claim 66, wherein the applied 90-degree RF pulse has a phase such that magnetization of the imaging object is forced in the direction of the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

68. (new) The process of claim 63, wherein the multi-echo NMR imaging sequence includes a first 90-degree RF pulse followed by a series of 180-degree RF pulses.

69. (new) The process of claim 68, wherein the series of 180-degree RF pulses includes n 180-degree pulses, which are followed by n echoes.

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70. (new) The process of claim 69, further comprising applying a second 90-degree RF pulse at a center of the *n*th echo, such that magnetization of the imaging object is oriented in the direction of the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

71. (new) The process of claim 16, wherein the fast-spin echo technique includes application of a multi-echo NMR imaging sequence.

72. (new) The process of claim 71, wherein the multi-echo NMR imaging sequence includes a plurality of different echoes, and wherein each of the plurality of different echoes is encoded differently.

73. (new) The process of claim 71, wherein the multi-echo NMR imaging sequence includes a plurality of different echoes, and wherein at least one of the plurality of different echoes is encoded differently than another one of the plurality of different echoes.

74. (new) The process of claim 71, further comprising applying a 90-degree RF pulse at the center of any of the plurality of different echoes.

75. (new) The process of claim 74, wherein the applied 90-degree RF pulse has a phase such that magnetization of the imaging object is forced in the direction of the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

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76. (new) The process of claim 71, wherein the multi-echo NMR imaging sequence includes a first 90-degree RF pulse followed by a series of 180-degree RF pulses.

77. (new) The process of claim 76, wherein the series of 180-degree RF pulses includes n 180-degree pulses, which are followed by n echoes.

78. (new) The process of claim 77, further comprising applying a second 90-degree RF pulse at a center of the n th echo, such that magnetization of the imaging object is oriented in the direction of the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

79. (new) The process of claim 33, wherein the diagnostic information is imaging data.

80. (new) The process of claim 35, wherein the diagnostic information is imaging data.

81. (new) The process of claim 41, wherein the diagnostic information is imaging data.

82. (new) The process of claim 33, wherein the imaging object is a human being, and the uniform polarizing magnetic field is produced by a magnetic resonance imaging

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system, wherein the human being stands upright within the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

83. (new) The process of claim 35, wherein the imaging object is a human being, and the uniform polarizing magnetic field is produced by a magnetic resonance imaging system, wherein the human being stands upright within the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

84. (new) The process of claim 41, wherein the imaging object is a human being, and the uniform polarizing magnetic field is produced by a magnetic resonance imaging system, wherein the human being stands upright within the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

85. (new) The process of claim 33, wherein each said 180-degree RF excitation pulse in the sequence generates a spin echo.

86. (new) The process of claim 85, wherein each said spin echo precedes a next 180-degree RF excitation pulse in the sequence.

87. (new) The process of claim 85, wherein the second 90-degree RF excitation pulse is applied at a center of the spin echo generated by a last 180-degree RF excitation pulse in the sequence.

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88. (new) The process of claim 85, wherein each said spin echo is encoded differently.

89. (new) The process of claim 85, wherein at least one said spin echo is encoded differently than another said spin echo.

90. (new) The process of claim 35, wherein each said 180-degree RF excitation pulse in the sequence generates a spin echo.

91. (new) The process of claim 90, wherein each said spin echo precedes a next 180-degree RF excitation pulse in the sequence.

92. (new) The process of claim 90, wherein the second 90-degree RF excitation pulse is applied at a center of the spin echo generated by a last 180-degree RF excitation pulse in the sequence.

93. (new) The process of claim 90, wherein each said spin echo is encoded differently.

94. (new) The process of claim 90, wherein at least one said spin echo is encoded differently than another said spin echo.

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95. (new) The process of claim 41, wherein each said 180-degree RF excitation pulse in the sequence generates a spin echo.
96. (new) The process of claim 95, wherein each said spin echo precedes a next 180-degree RF excitation pulse in the sequence.
97. (new) The process of claim 95, wherein the second 90-degree RF excitation pulse is applied at a center of the spin echo generated by a last 180-degree RF excitation pulse in the sequence.
98. (new) The process of claim 95, wherein each said spin echo is encoded differently.
99. (new) The process of claim 95, wherein at least one said spin echo is encoded differently than another said spin echo.
100. (new) The process of claim 33, wherein the second 90-degree RF excitation pulse has a phase such that magnetization of the imaging object is forced in the direction of the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

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101. (new) The process of claim 35, wherein the second 90-degree RF excitation pulse has a phase such that magnetization of the imaging object is forced in the direction of the uniform polarizing magnetic field.

102. (new) The process of claim 41, wherein the second 90-degree RF excitation pulse has a phase such that magnetization of the imaging object is forced in the direction of the uniform polarizing magnetic field.